

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as annexed to the IPER in accordance with the following LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS, which indicates the status of all the claims in the application and all amendments to the claims.

The amendments to the claims appear in the following pages under the heading "LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS". The claim listing replaces all previous versions of the claims presented in this application, and indicates any currently presented amendments and the status of each of the listed claims.

The amendments to the claims of this application, which originated in a foreign country, are submitted before examination on the merits and are not intended to have a narrowing effect for the purpose of patentability, but rather are made for one or more of the following reasons: (i) to remove drawing reference numerals unnecessary under U.S. practice; (ii) to remove or reduce multiple dependent claims to reduce the filing fee; (iii) to revise the original language originating in a foreign country to better conform to customary English usage and style for U.S. patent claiming; (iv) to revise original non-U.S. claim terminology into more appropriate English claim terms having a scope of meaning consistent with the original intended language in preparation for U.S. examination; (iv) to remove limitations having an effect in a foreign country which is different and unintended under U.S. practice (i.e., changing "consisting of" to "comprising"); (v) to remove or amend original claim language that could be regarded as alternative expressions that are acceptable under foreign patent practice but possibly subject to objection under U.S. practice, typically having a broadening or neutral effect in the amended claim; and/or (vi) to improve the clarity or meaning of the original language.

In the case of amendments effectively changing an original claim element expressed as a "means plus function" that could raise a presumption of claim expression under 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph to a structural expression or to an expression removing the presumption of a "means-plus-function" statement, it is not intended to narrow the claim so amended for purposes of patentability, but rather to place the claim in a form considered to be intended by the applicant from a foreign

country where claim limitations described in terms of means-plus-function do not have the same effect as under U.S. practice. Thus, such amendments are intended to establish a full range of equivalents to the claim elements so amended under the U.S. doctrine of equivalents and beyond the range associated with "means-plus-function" expressions according to 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph, just as if the claim so amended was presented originally in its amended form.

All rights are reserved to the original disclosed and claimed subject matter and any cancellation of claims is made without prejudice or disclaimer

LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 (Cancelled)

13. (New) A steam automatic dispensing device for preparing drinks exemplified by hot and frothed drinks, comprising:

- a first duct for introducing steam inside a drink;
- a second duct for introducing air inside said drink;
- an electronic control unit for controlling the introduction of either or both

steam and air through said first and second duct, said control unit being programmable to carry out a predetermined control cycle depending on the desired drink to be obtained, said first and second duct being provided with electromechanical means for controlling the introduction of either or both steam and air through said ducts and said electromechanical means being operated by said electronic control unit,

wherein said electromechanical means comprise a corresponding electrovalve for each of said first and second duct for controlling the introduction of steam and/or air through said ducts and wherein a first of said two electrovalves is a three-way electrovalve, a first way being connected to said second duct, a second way being connected to an air introducing pipe and a third way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe.

14. (New) A device according to claim 13, wherein a second of said two electrovalves is a three-way electrovalve, a first way being connected to said first duct, a second way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe and a third way being connected to said third way of said first three-way electrovalve through an intermediate pipe.

15. (New) A device according to claim 13, wherein a second of said two electrovalves is a three-way electrovalve, a first way being connected to said first duct, a second way being connected to a steam dispensing pipe and a third way being connected to a pipe open to the outside.

16. (New) A device according to claim 13, wherein said first duct has a closed end fit for being immersed in said drink and it is provided with a radial hole near said end.

17. (New) A device according to claim 16, wherein the end fit for being immersed in said drink of said second duct is provided with an axial opening located so to be in front of said radial hole of said first duct.

18. (New) A device according to claim 13, wherein said electronic control unit comprises a microprocessor, provided with a memory containing instructions relevant to an opening and closing cycle of said electrovalves are stored, said microprocessor controlling opening and closing of said electrovalves on the basis of said instructions.

19. (New) A device according to claim 18, wherein said memory contains the instructions relevant to the carrying out of a plurality of opening and closing cycles of said electrovalves and wherein said electronic control unit comprises a selector to select the wanted cycle.

20. (New) A device according to claim 19, including a temperature detecting electronic probe fit for being immersed in said drink, said probe generating a temperature-indicative signal that is processed by said microprocessor for controlling opening and closing of said electrovalves.

21. (New) A device according to claim 19, wherein said opening and closing cycle provides a first step wherein steam is introduced simultaneously through both said first and second duct and the introduction of air is prevented, a second step wherein steam is introduced through said first duct and air is introduced through said second duct and a third step wherein steam is introduced simultaneously through both said first and second duct and the introduction of air is prevented.

22. (New) A device according to claim 21, wherein said first second and third steps have a pre-set duration.

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23. (New) A device according to claim 20, wherein the duration of said first, second and third steps depends on the temperature signal coming from said temperature probe.

24. (New) A device according to claim 13, further comprising a container suitable for containing said drink, said first and second duct being fastened to said container.